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ABSTRACT

Seventy-one liberal arts students and 162 students enrolled in allied health and secretarial programs at Middlesex Community College were surveyed to obtain data for this study. The two groups are compared on the basis of personal characteristics, community of residence, work experience, parental characteristics and attitudes, attitudes toward themselves and their goals, and relationships with others. Career program students are more secure, more concerned with the practical side of life, more certain about their goals, their friends and themselves, and are more concerned about grades, leisure-time activities, and choice of friends. Few major differences were found in the characteristics and attitudes of the parents of the two groups. Career program students want vocational training and a job near their present residence; they expect to begin earning $5,000 to $10,000 and expect to like their jobs. Students in liberal arts programs also want vocational/professional education, but are more concerned about developing their minds and intellects. Many liberal arts students are still undecided about a career choice; they expect to begin earning at least $8,000 and are uncertain about whether they will like or dislike certain aspects of their jobs. (DC)

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A STUDY OF CAREER PROGRAM STUDENTS

MIDDLESEX COMMUMITY COLLEGE

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FOREWARD

The two studies included in this report are part of the third annual report from the office of institutional research. They are an extension of former studies because they focus on a particular group within the college population.

Former reports gave descriptive characteristics of Middlesex Community College students in general and showed some emerging trends. This report gives some Characteristics and Attitudes of Career Program Students, and the Employment Patterns of Career Program Graduates.

These studies were made as complementary to Relationship between Academic Ability and Achievement, and Persistence and Academic Achievement of Disadvantaged Students.

Dr. Glenda E. Lee,
Associate Dean

INTRODUCTION

It is necessary to define what is meant by career program students in the context of a community college curriculum. A limited definition (and the one used for these studies) would state that its objective is to prepare students for immediate entry, after leaving the community college, into middle-level vocations or to upgrade the skills of persons already employed.

The need for trained employees in the middle-level occupations is a primary reason why such support has been given to community colleges by business, industrial, governmental, and educational leaders. And, the rate of job turnover caused by technological obsolescence is high. General Electric has estimated that a third of its employees will need to undergo job retraining every ten years to handle the new jobs that their industry requires. (Life, 1965, p.4)

The rewards which flow from a good job are both monetary and psychic (Borow, 1964) and traditionally the best route to a good job is a good education. Trent and Medsker found that students with one or two years of college held better jobs than did non-college students. And, the Engineering and Manpower Commission reported in 1969 that the median salary for a two-year trained technician was $7,200 a year compared with $9,800 for a four-year graduate engineer. (U.S. News and World Report, 1970, p.90)

Since the choice of a career largely determines personal satisfaction as well as a means of earning a living, all concerned community college educators should be interested in both the personal talents and attitudes of their students and the job possibilities within their community. Thus, an integral part of the curriculum problem is the determination of career programs to match the diverse interests and abilities of the students.

And, the pay off for career programs is the successful placement for graduates. If the students get good jobs and appear comfortably satisfied with both their college education and the job, no one need fear for the success of the programs.

PART I

CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDES OF CAREER PROGRAM STUDENTS

A. Community of Residence and Part-Time Employment

B. Parents' Attitudes about Students' Choice of a Career, Friends, and Leisure Time Activities

C. Importance to Parents of Students' Grades and Occupational Plans

D. Students' Attitudes toward Themselves

E. Students' Relationships with Others

F. Attitudes and Values Related to Goals and Purposes of a College Education

A STUDY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDES OF CAREER PROGRAM STUDENTS

Background Information

One of the major problems facing the admissions office of a community college today is how to select students for careef programs when the number of applicants far exceeds the number of students who can be accomodated. Such a situation develops when the career programs have limited enrollment because of laboratory stations or clinical arrangements.

This study is an attempt to identify some characteristics or attitudes which may be typical of those students who enroll in and those who complete a career program. It is designed so that the first phase is a comparative study of selected characteristics and attitudes of career program students and liberal arts students.

During the academic year 1973-74, 162 students who were enrolled in allied health and secretarial programs at Middlesex Community College were asked to complete a questionnaire which was designed to identify some of these characteristics and attitudes. Later in the year, this instrument was used with 71 liberal arts students.

In the second phase of the study, students who have "graduated" from career programs will be surveyed by using the same attitudes and characteristics questionnaire. From these data an attempt will be made to determine which student characteristics and attitudes may be typical of students who complete a career program. The results may provide some usable measure for the future selection of career program students.

Characteristics of Students Enrolled in Career Programs Compared with Those in Liberal Arts Programs.

The Career Program students in this study are enrolled in dental assisting, medical laboratory technology, dental hygiene, executive secretarial, medical assisting, nursing, and radiologic technology. As can be seen in Table I, 89 percent of the career program students are female. Almost half (46%) are between the ages of 19-21, one-fourth are over 21 and the other one-fourth are under 19 years old. Three-fourths (76%) are not married. The same percentage are either the oldest in the family or the middle sibling but not the youngest.

The Liberal Arts students are 70 percent female. Forty-five percent are between the ages of 19-21 years, twenty percent are over 21, and 35 percent are under 19 years of age. Eighty-seven percent are not married, and eighty percent are the oldest or middle sibling but not the youngest in the family.

TABLE I
COMPARISON OF CHARACTERISTICS OF CAREER PROGRAMS
AND LIBERAL ARTS STUDENTS
N=233

	Career Programs		Liberal Arts		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Sex					
Male	17	10	21	30	38
Female	145	89	50	70	195
Age					
0-18	43	26	25	35	68
19-21	76	46	32	45	108
22-25	16	9	7	9	23
over 25	27	16	7	9	34
Sibling Position					
Only child	4	1	3	4	7
Oldest in family	61	37	20	28	81
Neither oldest or youngest	64	39	35	49	99
Youngest in family	33	20	13	18	46
Marital Status					
Single	124	76	62	87	186
Married (no children)	10	6	3	4	13
Married (with children)	25	15	5	7	30
Widowed, Divorced, separated	3	1	1	1	4
Estimate of Family Income					
No idea	34	22	20	30	54
Less than $3,000	3	2	2	3	5
$3,000-$6,999	14	9	1	1	15
$7,000-$12,999	49	31	21	30	70
$13,000-$17,999	40	26	12	17	52
over $18,000	16	10	13	19	29
Total	162		71		

One difference to be noted between the two study groups is the much larger percentage of females in the career programs. Also, that many more are married with children. Among Liberal Arts students, more are the middle sibling of a family and under 19 years of age. There is very little difference between the two groups in family income. Two-thirds of the students of both groups estimate a family income of over $7,000. However, 8 percent more of the Liberal Arts students have no idea of family income. While, 8 percent more of students in career programs estimate family incomes between $3,000 and $7,000.

Community of Residence and Part-Time Employment of Career Program and Liberal Arts Students.

Very few students in this study are from rural or small town areas or from the metropolitan area. Table II shows that about three-fourths of the students in both groups are from communities with a population between 10,000 to 100,000. Over half have lived in their present community between 10-20 years, and one-third of each group intend to remain in this community. There is more uncertainty about future job location among the career program students (47%) than the liberal arts students (39%).

The students in career programs have had more work experience which influenced their choice of occupation than have the liberal arts students. Over a third of the former group have had career related work experiences compared with a fifth of the latter group. Thus, it would appear that students in career programs have a better understanding of the type of occupation for which they would like to prepare themselves.

Sixty-five percent of the students in liberal arts and about half of the career program students are working between 10-30 hours per week while attending classes at Middlesex Community College. But, 63 percent of the liberal arts students are working on jobs having no relation to their choice of occupation while less than half (42%) of the students in career programs are not working on career related jobs.

TABLE II
COMPARISON OF COMMUNITY OF RESIDENCE AND PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT OF CAREER PROGRAM AND LIBERAL ARTS STUDENTS
N=233

	Career Programs		Liberal Arts		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Size of community where most of life was spent					
Metropolis	1		0		1
Suburb	20	12	10	15	30
City (100,000-500,000)	11	6	2	2	13
City (10,000-100,000)	64	39	31	43	95
Town (2,500-10,000)	59	36	26	36	85
Town (under 2,500)	6	3	1	1	7
Open country	1		1	1	2

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TABLE II (cont'd)

	Career Programs		Liberal Arts		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Years lived in present community					
Less than 1 year	9	5	1	1	10
1-4 years	13	8	4	5	17
4-10 years	24	14	11	15	35
10-20 years	93	57	48	67	141
over 20 years	22	13	7	9	29
Do you intend to remain in present community?					
Yes	52	32	24	33	76
No	32	19	19	26	51
Not sure	77	47	28	39	105
Previous work experience influenced current occupational field					
Very large	33	20	10	14	43
Large	19	11	6	8	25
Average	30	18	13	18	43
Small	14	8	16	22	30
Very small	10	6	8	11	18
None	56	34	18	25	74
Average number of hours worked outside home while attending classes					
None	37	22	18	25	55
1-10	30	18	4	7	34
11-20	67	41	32	45	99
21-30	19	11	14	20	33
More than 30	8	4	3	4	11
Does job relate to your program of study?					
Not working	29	17	11	16	40
Yes	65	40	14	20	74
No	68	42	45	63	113

Parental Characteristics and Attitudes

There appears to be little significant difference in the educational background of the fathers of liberal arts and career program students. About half of the fathers of both groups graduated from high school and had some college or post-secondary education, while another 20-24 percent had graduated from college. But, as shown in Table III, 15 percent more of the career students' fathers had had career/occupational education.

There is some difference, however, between the fathers' and mothers' educational status. About 20 percent of the fathers in both groups did not graduate from high school, while only 15 percent of the mothers were not high school graduates. But, fewer of the mothers were college graduates. Only 14 percent of the career program student's mothers graduated from college compared to 20 percent of the liberal arts.

The educational background of parents probably affect the attitudes of their sons and daughters about a college education. However, it was the mothers of both groups of students who either took it for granted or actively urged college for their children to a greater extent than the fathers. As can be seen in Table III, 68 percent of the mothers as compared to 61 percent of the fathers of students in career programs felt strongly about college for their children.

There is an indication that the parents of career program students have a stronger feeling of importance for a college education. In the liberal arts group only 48 percent of the fathers and 56 percent of the mothers felt strongly about a college education for their sons and daughters. It is interesting to note that about 25-30 percent of the parents of both groups left the decision about college to the student.

How Students Think Their Parents Feel about Their Choice of a Career, of Friends, and of Leisure Time Activities.

Students in career programs think that their parents place greater importance on the choice of a career than do liberal arts students. Three times as many of them said the choice of a career was very important to their parents. More of them also felt that their choice of friends was very important to their parents. It appears that the parents of students in career programs have helped give focus to the career choice of their sons and daughters.

Patricia Cross (1968) in describing the characteristics of occupationally oriented students said the responses they gave to questions presented a picture of young people who know what they want and are pursuing an obvious pathway to their goal. She also said they give less indication of need for help in educational and vocational planning than do liberal arts students. This study substantiates the former study showing the influence of parents in career guidance.

TABLE III
PARENTAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDES

	Career Programs		Liberal Arts		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Number of years of schooling of father					
Did not graduate from h.s.	39	23	15	21	54
Graduated from h.s.	54	33	20	28	74
Some college or univ. or other post-secondary training	33	20	17	23	50
College graduate	18	11	10	14	28
Some graduate or professional school	4	2	2	3	6
Completed graduate or professional school	12	7	6	8	18
Number of years of schooling of mother					
Did not graduate from h.s.	27	15	12	16	39
Graduated from h.s.	85	52	31	43	116
Some college or univ. or other post-secondary training	24	14	12	16	36
College graduate	14	8	12	16	26
Some graduate or professional school	6	3	2	3	8
Completed graduate or professional school	5	3	2	3	7
Did father have any career/occupation education?					
Yes	90	55	29	40	119
No	48	29	21	29	69
Don't know	20	12	21	29	41
How father felt about student attending college					
Took it for granted	19	12	12	20	31
Actively urged college	75	49	23	35	98
Left it up to student	45	29	22	30	67
Had mixed feelings	5	3	1	2	6
Was somewhat opposed	1		1	2	2
Don't know	7	4	7	10	14

TABLE III (cont'd)

	Career Programs		Liberal Arts		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
How mother felt about student attending college					
Took it for granted	21	15	15	23	36
Actively urged college	75	53	25	40	100
Left it up to student	36	25	20	30	56
Had mixed feelings	--	--	2	3	
Was somewhat opposed	2	1	1	2	
Don't know	3	1	1	2	

Table IV shows that twice as many of the students in career programs as in liberal arts feel that their leisure time activities are very important to their parents. These three factors (choice of career, friends and leisure time activities) give emphasis to former findings in which career students were found to be more practical, have greater commitment to the philosophy of education for employment, and have stronger feelings about the use of leisure time for purposeful activities.

TABLE IV
IMPORTANCE TO PARENTS OF STUDENTS' CHOICE OF CAREER, FRIENDS, AND LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

	Career Programs		Liberal Arts		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Importance of career choice to parents					
Very important	42	26	7	9	49
Quite important	47	29	22	30	69
Fairly important	45	28	27	38	72
Not very important	16	10	8	11	24
Not important at all	9	6	7	9	16
Importance of choice of friends to parents					
Very important	29	18	12	16	41
Quite important	43	27	18	25	61
Fairly important	57	36	26	36	83
Not very important	21	13	10	14	31
Not important at all	7	4	4	5	11

TABLE IV (cont'd)

	Career Programs		Liberal Arts		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Importance of choice of leisure time activities to parents					
Very important	35	22	7	10	42
Quite important	25	17	18	26	43
Fairly important	57	36	24	34	81
Not very important	28	17	14	20	42
Not important at all	11	7	7	10	18
Importance of receiving good grades in school to parents					
Very important	77	47	24	34	101
Quite important	55	33	30	42	85
Fairly important	27	16	16	23	43
Not very important	1	--	1	1	2
Not important at all	2	1	0		2

Note: Not all students answer all questions. Thus, when the sum of the numbers given for each item does not equal the total number in the survey, some students did not respond.

Importance to Parents of Students' Grades and Occupational Plans.

Many more of the students in career programs think grades are very important to their parents than do liberal arts students. However, not many in either group felt that grades were not important at all to their parents. The difference is between whether grades are very important or only fairly important as shown in Table IV.

Three-fourths of the career program students feel certain that it is very important to their parents that they find the kind of work they want. Table V shows that a little less than two-thirds of the liberal arts students feel the same.

Over three-fourths of the parents of career program students think their son's or daughter's current choice of an occupation is a good one and that there is a good chance they will reach their goal. This is twice the number of the parents of liberal arts students who feel the same way. In fact, a third of them either never discussed the student's occupation with him/her or left it entirely up to the student.

TABLE V
IMPORTANCE TO PARENTS OF STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL PLANS

	Career Program		Liberal Arts		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Importance of finding the kind of work you want to parents					
Very important	120	74	43	61	163
Quite important	35	21	21	30	65
Fairly important	7	4	7	9	16
Not very important	--	--	--	--	
Not important at all	--	--	--	--	
What father thinks of occupational plans					
Shooting too high	1	1	2	2	3
A good occupation and a good chance of making it	127	78	26	36	153
Should be trying for something different	1	1	6	8	7
Entirely up to student	11	6	14	19	25
Never discussed it	8	4	16	22	24
What mother thinks of occupational plans					
Shooting too high	1	1	1	1	2
A good occupation and a good chance of making it	115	70	37	52	152
Should be trying for something different	2	1	4	5	6
Entirely up to student	12	7	14	19	26
Never discussed it	3	1	8	11	11

Summary.

In comparing the characteristics of career program students with liberal arts students, none of the findings are earthshaking. However, the students in career programs are largely females who have had some work experience in the area of their college program. They feel very uncertain about whether they will find work and remain in their present community.

Their fathers are less apt to be college graduates than are the fathers of liberal arts students, but more apt to have had career/occupational education. While, their mothers are more apt to be high school graduates but less apt to be college graduates. The mothers appear to have had a strong influence in their daughters' choice of an occupation, perhaps because they are very young girls.

There is a definite indication of strong parental influence throughout the career program students' responses to the items on the questionnaire. A somewhat more liberal, independent choice is shown by the responses of the liberal arts students.

Attitudes toward Themselves.

Attitudes toward oneself can be divided into positive and negative feelings. The positive feelings shown in this study are analyzed first.

Even though nearly all the students in both groups said that they had a feeling they were of equal worth to most other people, the career program students felt more strongly about it. Twice as many of the students in career programs as in liberal arts felt strongly that they did have a number of good qualities. And, almost three times as many felt strongly that they could do things as well as most other people.

As shown in Table VI, ninety percent of both groups take a positive attitude toward themselves, but 11 percent of the students in career programs feel more strongly about it. The career students definitely are more satisfied with themselves.

When questions of a negative nature were asked, the students in career programs again gave a stronger reaction. Sixty percent strongly disagreed that they felt that they were failures compared to only forty-six percent of the liberal arts students.

Over half of the career students disagreed strongly that they did not have much to be proud of, and a third simply disagreed. While, 90 percent of the liberal arts students disagreed that they did not have much to be proud of, only forty percent strongly disagreed.

Many of the liberal arts students said they felt useless at times (60 percent) but only three percent felt strongly about it. The students in career programs also felt useless at times but were more evenly divided--forty-three percent agreeing and fifty-four percent disagreeing.

TABLE VI
ATTITUDES TOWARD ONESELF OF CAREER PROGRAM STUDENTS
AS COMPARED TO LIBERAL ARTS STUDENTS

	DA 15	DH 14	ES 16	MA 12	MLT 26	NU 56	XR 22	LA 71	TOTAL CAREER 162	LA Per-cent	CAREER Percent
Feeling that I am a person of equal worth, at least on an equal plane with others											
Strongly agree	8	8	8	4	9	39	7	25	83	35	51
Agree	6	6	8	8	16	17	15	45	76	63	46
Disagree	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1		1
I have a number of good qualities											
Strongly agree	6	9	5	4	8	32	4	14	68	20	42
Agree	9	5	10	8	18	24	17	56	91	79	56
Disagree	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
I am able to do things as well as most other people											
Strongly agree	8	5	5	3	8	33	5	11	67	15	41
Agree	6	9	8	9	17	13	14	56	86	80	53
Disagree	2	0	3	0	6	0	3	3	9	4	5
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	1	0	1	0
I take a positive attitude toward myself											
Strongly agree	4	5	3	3	4	20	4	11	43	15	26
Agree	10	7	12	9	18	35	13	53	105	75	65
Disagree	2	2	1	0	2	1	4	7	12	10	7
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1		

TABLE VI (cont'd)

	DA	DH	ES	MA	MLT	NU	XR	LA	Total Career 162	LA per-cent	CAREER Percen
I am satisfied with myself											
Strongly agree	5	6	3	3	5	14	2	6	33	9	23
Agree	9	7	11	9	16	39	13	51	104	72	64
Disagree	2	1	2	0	5	3	5	9	18	13	11
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	6	
I feel that I am a failure											
Strongly agree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	1	0	2	0	1	2	0	3	5	4	3
Disagree	3	3	4	8	12	18	10	35	58	50	36
Strongly disagree	12	11	10	4	13	34	12	33	96	46	60
I do not have much to be proud of											
Strongly agree	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	5	0	3
Agree	1	0	1	1	2	2	1	6	8	10	5
Disagree	6	4	5	5	9	14	11	35	59	50	36
Strongly disagree	9	8	10	6	3	36	9	28	88	40	55
I feel useless at times											
Strongly agree	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	5	3	3
Agree	8	5	9	4	10	16	13	40	66	57	40
Disagree	4	8	6	6	12	28	6	21	69	30	42
Strongly disagree	1	1	1	2	3	10	2	7	20	10	12
I should respect myself more											
Strongly agree	2	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	7		4
Agree	4	3	6	3	9	9	3	20	37	30	22
Disagree	10	6	7	4	9	32	12	34	80	50	49
Strongly disagree	0	3	2	5	5	12	5	13	32	20	19

NOTE: D.A. - Dental Assisting
D.H. - Dental Hygiene
E.S. - Executive Secretary
M.A. - Medical Assisting
M.L.T. - Medical Laboratory Technician
N.U. - Nursing
X.R. - Radiologic Technology
L.A. - Liberal Arts

Relationship with Others.

In considering relationships with their friends and their parents, the students were asked about how many friends they had, the amount of consideration they had for them, and how they would compare their educational plans with their friends.

Two-thirds of the students in career programs felt that they had about the same number of friends as the average student. However, 16 percent said more than average and 13 percent said less. This is a more positive response than that given by liberal arts students. Three-fourths of the liberal arts students said that they had about the same number of friends as the average student, but one-fifth said less than the average number of friends.

The liberals arts students appear to have more consideration for their friends according to their own interpretation. Almost a third of them said that they are always or usually considerate of their friends. This compares with only one-fifth of the career program students.

In comparing their educational plans with their two closest friends, the majority of both groups felt that their friends had goals equal to or higher than theirs. Table VII shows that only a small percentage thought that they had friends with goals lower than their own.

One-third of both groups felt that they had had a very happy childhood. However, many more of the liberal arts students said they had had only an average or an unhappy childhood. Only one students admitted to a very unhappy childhood.

Students in liberal arts programs show a closer attachment with their mothers (53 percent) than with their fathers(39 percent). While, students in career programs show very little difference in attachment between their mother (52 percent) or father (56 percent). If one compares the lack of attachment to parents, one finds that liberal arts students lack the close attachment to each parent more than do students in career programs.

Summary.

In summarizing attitudes toward themselves and their relationships with others, the students in career programs appear to have an overall good feeling about themselves and their relationships with others. They tend to be positive in looking at themselves, their goals, and their friends.

Liberal arts students appear to be detached from others, more uncertain about themselves, and their relationship with others, and somewhat uncertain about their educational goals as they are compared to others.

TABLE VII
RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS OF CAREER PROGRAMS STUDENTS
AS COMPARED TO LIBERAL ARTS STUDENTS

	DA 15	DH 14	ES 16	MA 12	MLT 26	NU 56	XR 22	LA 71	TOTAL CAREER 162	LA Percent	CAREER Percent
Do you have more or less than the average number of friends?											
More	4	1	3	1	3	11	4	5	27	6	16
Less	2	1	7	0	3	5	4	13	22	20	13
About the same	10	12	5	11	20	30	14	51	112	74	69
Do you have consideration for your friends?											
Yes, I always do	2	0	3	0	2	0	1	2	9	4	5
Yes, I usually do	2	3	3	4	1	9	3	19	27	27	16
Sometimes I do	7	6	7	6	7	28	12	25	77	36	48
No, usually not	5	5	3	2	1	16	5	19	43	27	26
No, never	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	6	6	3
Comparing the educational plans of my two closest friends to those of my own											
Both are lower	2	1	3	1	1	6	5	8	21	12	13
Both are the same	8	6	5	3	1	20	8	23	58	35	36
Both are higher	1	0	3	0	2	1	1	5	8	6	5
One lower & one higher	2	3	4	3	9	12	6	6	39	8	24
One lower & one same	1	2	1	4	2	10	1	12	21	20	13
One higher & one same	1	1	0	1	2	5	1	11	12	19	7
My Childhood was											
Very happy	8	8	7	8	3	14	6	22	54	30	33
Happy	4	3	4	0	14	27	7	17	58	24	36
Average	3	3	5	4	9	12	9	24	45	34	28
Unhappy	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	7	2	12	1
Very unhappy	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1		

TABLE VII (cont'd)

	DA 15	DH 14	ES 16	MA 12	MLT 26	NU 56	XR 22	LA 71	TOTAL CAREER 162	LA Percent	CAREER Percent
The attachment between my father & I can be described as											
Extremely close	0	3	3	4	5	16	2	11	32	16	20
Very close	10	6	7	3	8	17	7	16	58	23	36
Considerable	3	3	2	2	6	13	6	21	35	31	22
Some	1	0	2	1	4	3	3	9	14	13	8
A little	1	2	0	2	2	5	4	10	16	15	10
None at all	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	2	4	2	2
The attachment between my mother and I can be described as											
Extremely close	4	4	4	3	4	8	2	14	29	21	18
Very close	7	6	6	4	6	19	7	21	55	32	34
Considerable	4	2	4	1	8	4	6	21	29	32	18
Some	0	0	2	2	4	0	2	8	10	13	6
A little	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	2
None at all	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		

Attitudes and Values Related to Goals.

Getting ahead in life is very important to 61 percent of the students in career programs, and fairly important to 34 percent of them. It is very important to 18 percent less of the liberal arts students and fairly important to 19 percent less. However, only one student said it was very unimportant. This clearly shows that career program students tend to put more importance on getting ahead than do liberal arts students.

Even though getting ahead is not as important to liberal arts students as to career program students, they do think their chances of getting ahead are pretty good (73 percent). This compares to 58 percent of the students in career programs who think their chances are pretty good. However, 28 percent of the latter group think their chances are excellent (only 8 percent of the liberal arts students think so).

This is an interesting comparison when one notes that 41 percent of the liberal arts students think that most of life's satisfaction will stem from their career or occupation compared to 32 percent of the students in career programs. More of the career program students think that family relationships will provide most of life's satisfaction.

The other choices offered were: religious beliefs/activities, community participation in citizen affairs, recreational activities, and national participation in citizen affairs. Religious beliefs/ activities rated third in importance for both groups of students but only 4-6 percent choose it. The other two choices were selected by only one person.

When asked what quality was most important for success, both groups identified three. The first choice of each group was the ability to get along with people. About 44 percent of each group gave it the highest rating in importance. The second and third choices varied between the two groups. Career programs students selected lots of hard work and effort (37 percent) as second in importance, with a special talent or aptitude as third (10 percent). The liberal arts students placed these two qualities as equal in importance (25 percent for each).

The other qualities from which the students could make a selection were: a high degree of intelligence, knowing the right people, and luck. None of the three received over four percent of the students' choice as being most important for success.

In the future, students believe that becoming happy/contented will be of most importance and finding a real purpose in life will be second. Finding time to relax and enjoy life is third in importance. About 90 percent of the students in each group chose these three factors.

Other choices were: being well liked, having financial security, receiving awards and recognition, becoming famous, following a formal religious code, and becoming a mature person. The most surprising factor was that only one liberal arts student and three career program students thought becoming a mature person was the most important goal, and only five liberal arts students and eight career program students rated financial security as most important. Only one person selected each of the other factors.

TABLE VIII

GOAL RELATED ATTITUDES & VALUES OF CAREER PROGRAM STUDENTS AS COMPARED TO LIBERAL ARTS STUDENTS

	DA 15	DH 14	ES 16	MA 12	MLT 26	NU 56	XR 22	LA 71	TOTAL CAREER 162	LA Percent	CAREER Percent
The importance of getting ahead in life:											
Very important	8	8	8	9	13	38	15	30	99	43	61
Fairly important	5	6	7	3	13	16	6	32	56	45	34
Not very important	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	8	5	11	3
Very unimportant	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1		
My chances of getting ahead are:											
Excellent	3	4	8	1	4	20	6	6	46	8	28
Pretty good	6	9	6	8	19	34	12	52	94	73	58
Fair	5	1	2	3	13	1	3	11	18	15	11
Somewhat limited	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	1
Not much chance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	
The quality most important for success is:											
A special talent or aptitude	2	1	2	0	5	6	1	15	17	25	10
Luck	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3		1
A high degree of intelligence	1	0	3	0	1	3	0	2	8	3	4
An ability to get along with people	7	9	5	8	9	26	8	26	72	43	44
Knowing the right people	0	0	1	0	0	12	0	2	1	3	
Lots of hard work and effort	5	4	4	4	11	9	11	15	60	25	37
Most of life's satisfaction will expectedly stem from											
Your career or occupation	4	3	6	3	6	25	4	28	51	41	32
Family relationships	7	9	8	8	16	28	13	33	89	48	58
Recreational activities	4	0	1	1	3	1	4	2	14	3	8
Religious beliefs/ activities	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	1	6	
(Community participation in citizen affairs	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	
(National participation in citizen affairs	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1		

TABLE VIII (cont'd)

	DA 15	DH 13	ES 16	MA 12	MLT 26	NU 56	XR 22	LA 71	TOTAL CAREER 162	LA Per-cen	CAREER Percent
In my future life the thing of most importance will probably be:											
Being well liked	1	0	3	1	1	2	1	2	8	2	5
Financial security	0	1	0	0	3	3	1	5	8	7	5
Becoming happy/content	8	5	7	5	11	27	11	33	74	48	46
Time to relax and enjoy life	2	5	1	4	3	8	2	8	25	11	15
Finding a real purpose in life	3	2	3	1	7	15	6	20	37	30	23
Awards & recognition	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	3	1	1
Becoming famous	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1		
Becoming a mature person	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	1	1
Following a formal religious code	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0		
The most important goal in attending college is:											
To develop my personality	1	5	1	0	3	3	1	1	14	1	8
To develop mind & intellect	3	5	2	1	9	21	5	31	46	45	28
To secure training (vocational/profess.)	8	3	13	8	13	30	15	23	89	33	55
To make a desirable marriage	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		
To earn a higher income	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	4	6	7	3
To kill time	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	
To become cultured	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1		
To avoid being drafted	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1		
To please my parents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
None of these	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	13	0
During the first year following completion of my present schooling I expect to earn:											
under $4,000	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	6	2	9	1
$4,000-$7,000	13	1	7	5	7	13	8	13	54	18	35
$8,000-$10,000	0	10	5	1	8	22	11	17	57	24	37
Over $10,000	0	1	2	0	3	8	0	5	14	6	9
Does not apply	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	3	3	1
Don't know	0	2	2	5	3	8	2	27	22	40	14

Goals and Purposes of a College Education.

For liberal arts students the most important goal in attending college, is developing their mind and intellect (45 percent). Second in importance is to secure vocational/professional training (33 percent), and third is to earn a higher income (7 percent). However, 13 percent said that their goal was not among the list offered. None of them felt that to become cultured, to avoid the draft, to please their parents, or to make a desirable marriage, was important. Only one chose to develop a personality or to kill time as important.

For students in career programs the most important goal in attending college, is to secure vocational/professional training (55 percent), followed by development of mind and intellect (28 percent). Eight percent said to develop their personality and three percent said to earn a higher salary, was important. Only one student gave each of the other goals as the most important in attending college. None said to please their parents.

Over two-thirds of the students in career programs think the main purpose of a college education is to provide technical training as compared to 52 percent of the liberal arts students. The second purpose selected by many students (as the main purpose of a college education) is a basic general education--30 percent of the liberal arts and 16 percent of the career program students. Only 7-9 percent think college is to develop inter-personal compatibility, 5-6 percent think to help develop moral capacities, and 1-2 percent think developing an interest in community and world problems or preparing for a happy marriage and family life is most important.

The students were asked during what grade of school they decided on their present occupational plans. Twelve percent of the liberal arts students said they were still undecided and 6 percent said they did not remember. However, the majority said either between high school and college or in their junior or senior year of high school.

None of the students in career programs are still undecided about their occupational goal and only one did not remember when the choice was made. Twnety-nine percent decided during their senior year of high school, 20 percent their junior year, and 19 percent between high school and college. However, nine percent said during their sophomore year of high school, nine percent said grade school, and 7 percent said junior high school.

When asked how much they expected to earn the first year after their present schooling, 40 percent of the liberal arts students and 14 percent of the career program students said they did not know what to expect. But, one-third of the career students said between $4,000-$7,000 and another third said between $8,000-$10,000. Nine percent expect to earn over $10,000. Of the liberal arts students who did make a guess, 24 percent said between $8,000-$10,000.

What Students Think They Will Dislike Most about Their Jobs. The students were presented with eight suggested items as to why they might not like the job they realistically thought they would be doing. Two-fifths said they thought that they would dislike nothing about their future job, and another fifth said there would be other factors not listed that they would most dislike. There was almost no difference in the response between the liberal arts and career students pertaining to these two items.

However, of the eight items listed the three most selected most often by both groups not included in the above three-fifths were:

a.) no chance to be free from supervision by others
b.) no opportunity to be creative and original
c.) no chance to earn a great deal of money

None chose social status and prestige as a factor of any importance. And, none felt that they would not be given ample opportunity to be helpful to others.

Only one liberal arts student said he thought he would dislike his job because it would not enable him to look forward to a stable and secure future.

The item on which the two groups differed most was relative to their use of special abilities. Five percent of the career students felt they would not have the opportunity to use their special abilities, while only one percent of the liberal arts students felt that way.

TABLE IX
GOALS AND PURPOSES OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION
OF CAREER PROGRAM STUDENTS AS COMPARED
TO LIBERAL ARTS STUDENTS

	DA 15	DH 14	ES 16	MA 12	MLT 26	NU 56	XR 22	LA 71	TOTAL CAREER 162	LA Per-cent	CAREER Percent
The main purpose of a college education is that it:											
Provides technical training	11	6	9	9	19	36	18	35	108	52	68
Develops interpersonal compatibility	2	2	2	1	1	3	1	6	12	9	7
Provides a basic general education	1	4	4	1	5	10	1	20	26	30	16
Develops interest (community & world problems)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	
Helps develop moral capacities	0	0	0	1	1	5	1	4	8	6	5
Prepares for a happy marriage & family life	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	1
My present occupational plans were decided during:											
Grade school	0	2	0	0	0	7	2	3	14	4	9
Junior high school	2	1	0	0	0	7	1	8	11	12	7
Sophomore year-h.s.	2	1	3	0	1	6	1	3	14	4	9
Junior year-h.s.	3	0	5	1	10	7	2	9	28	13	20
Senior year-h.s.	6	4	3	7	8	8	9	11	45	16	29
Between h.s.& coll.	0	1	3	2	5	13	3	15	27	22	19
Freshmen yr. -jr. coll.	0	2	1	0	0	2	2	5	7	7	4
Soph. yr. - jr. coll.	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	6	3	3
Still undecided	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	12	7
Don't remember	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	4	1	6	

TABLE IX (cont'd)

	DA 15	DH 14	ES 16	MA 12	MLT 26	NU 56	XR 22	LA 71	TOTAL CAREER 162	LA Per-cent	CAREER Percent
The thing I will dislike most about the job I will be doing is:											
No opportunity to use my special abilities	1	0	0	2	0	5	0	1	8	1	5
No opportunity to earn a great deal of money	4	0	3	0	0	2	2	6	11	8	7
No opportunity to be creative and original	1	6	1	1	4	3	0	8	16	11	9
No social status & prestige	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
No chance to work with people rather than things	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	
No stable & secure future	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
No chance to be free from supervision by others	1	1	2	0	2	5	3	9	14	12	8
No opportunity to help others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nothing to dislike about the job	5	6	5	2	14	28	8	28	68	39	45
Other	2	0	5	6	2	12	6	16	33	22	22

Conclusions

It is evident that most of the career program students live in communities between 10,000 to 100,000 population, and that in general they plan to stay there. There are few major differences in the parental characteristics and attitudes between career students' parents and liberal arts students' parents.

The fathers of career program students appear to have had more experience in the middle level occupations of the manpower spectrum, and the mothers of career program students appear to be somewhat more influential with their children's choice of a career.

It does appear as though leisure time activities, choice of friends, and importance of grades have more impact on career students. And, that liberal arts students have less direction in their lives, less concern for the practical side of life, and more independence from parents.

The attitudes of career students give the impression that they are quite self-satisfied, feel good about their friends, and like their chosen profession. While, the liberal arts students are more uncertain about their goals, their friends, and themselves.

It was overwhelmingly important to students in both groups that they get along with people. However, they rejected the idea of getting ahead by knowing the right people or through luck. They are willing to use their talents and to work hard.

Both groups are anxious to find a real purpose in life and to become happy and contented with their future lives. They showed very little concern for financial security, awards and recognition, or becoming famous. Nor, were they concerned about becoming mature people.

Students in career programs know what they want from their college education. They want vocational training and a job near their present residence. Most of them had selected their choice of career during high school or soon after. They expect to begin earning between $5,000-$10,000 immediately after graduation and do not expect to find many things to dislike about their jobs.

Students in liberal arts programs are also concerned about securing vocational/professional education but more concerned about developing their mind and intellect. None of them indicated that they were in college to become cultured, to avoid the draft, or to please their parents. Many of them are still undecided about a career choice, and of those who have chosen a career some do not even remember when they made the choice. Their salary expectations are a little different from career program students but most of them are realistic. They expect to earn somewhat higher salaries--two-thirds expect to begin with a salary of $8,000 or more. They are more uncertain about whether they will like or dislike certain aspects of their jobs.

Recommendations

This report covers only Phase I of the attitudinal study. Therefore, it seems wise to do a survey of the same group of students who ultimately graduate to determine such characteristics and attitudes as might be more typical of students who complete a career program. However, there appears to be other attitudes which might contribute more to helping select students who persist, and for that reason the first recommendation would be to expand the survey to include more meaningful questions.

The second recommendation would be to do a follow-up study of this entire group of career program students to determine their success in finding and keeping suitable employment. And, to do a more personal type of data collection.

PART II

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS OF CAREER GRADUATES

A. Employment Information

B. Salaries of Graduates

C. Relation and Satisfaction of Job to College Program

D. College Courses Most Helpful

E. Location of Employment

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS OF CAREER GRADUATES

One of Middlesex Community College's main objectives is to provide education and training for persons interested in employment after a one or two year period. During the first four years of the college's operation, the career programs were in allied health, business, and secretarial studies.

A survey made in the spring of 1974 obtained specific information about the one hundred and ninety-seven students who graduated in 1972 and 1973 in dental assisting, medical assisting, medical laboratory technology, radiologic technology, business administration, and secretarial studies. Some of the questions which were investigated were:

1. Where are the graduates employed? What are their annual salaries?
2. Are their jobs related to their educational programs?
3. How do they rate their satisfaction with their jobs?
4. What is their evaluation of their M.C.C. program?

Questionnaires were sent to all 1972-73 graduates of career programs. Each student was asked to complete the questionnaire and return it to the office of institutional research. The following data were obtained.

General Information. Of the eighty-eight student questionnaires returned, 77 percent were female and 23 percent male. It should be noted that the programs included in the survey are those in which women usually enroll (allied health and secretarial). Most of the male responses are from graduates in business administration.

Fifty-nine percent of the respondents are between 21-25 years of age. Thirty-three percent are between 16-20 years, 7 percent between 26-35 years and one was over 35 years of age. Seventy percent are single. Table I shows that age, sex and marital status by academic program at Middlesex Community College.

TABLE I
CHARACTERISTICS OF CAREER GRADUATES
N=88

Program	No.	%	Sex		Age (Years)				Marital Status	
			M	F	16-20	21-25	26-35	over 35	Single	Married
Business	20	23	16	4	2	15	3	0	11	9
Dental Ass't	16	17	0	16	11	5	0	0	15	1
Medical Ass't	8	9	0	8	2	6	0	0	4	4
Med. Lab. Tech.	9	10	2	7	0	9	0	0	7	2
Secretarial	29	34	1	28	12	14	2	1	21	5
Radiologic Tech.	6	7	2	4	1	4	1	0	4	2
Total	88	100	21	67	28	53	6	1	62	23

Employment Information. Students were asked if they were currently employed full-time or part-time. Ninety-one percent are employed with 83 percent saying full-time. Of the nine percent unemployed, six are attending a four-year college, three are homemakers, and three had not found a position.

They were then asked how long they had been in their present positions. One-fourth had had their present position over 18 months; one-half between 7-12 months, and the remaining one-fourth had been employed on their current job less than 6 months. Sixty-one percent had had no other job, but 36 percent said this was their second or third job.

The reasons the students gave for changing jobs fell into eight categories including a category of "other" than the reasons suggested. Indicated below are the reasons given and the percentage who indicated that reason.

Reason	Percentage
1. Higher salary	20
2. More advancement opportunities	24
3. Better hours	13
4. Personality conflicts	6
5. Felt inadequate on job	3
6. More convenient location of new job	5
7. More fringe benefits	11
8. Other	18

Salaries. When the students were asked about their salaries, they were asked to give income before taxes and deductions. There were several differences between the salaries of males and females and they are shown separately in Table II.

The salaries of males are divided evenly between $5,200-$7,800, $7,800-over $10,000, and under $5,200. It is interesting that three males said they made over $10,000 annual salary.

The salaries of females show a different division--with one-third receiving $5,200-$6,500, another third $6,500-$7,800, and only 12 percent receiving under $5,200. Two females said that they made over $10,000 a year.

Thus, because the number of students studied is small, there is less difference than a percentage breakdown shows. And, in income females appear to fare almost as well as males in the career market.

TABLE II
ANNUAL SALARY BY SEX
N=88

Annual Salary	Total		Female		Male	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under $5200	15	17	8	12	7	33
$5200-$6500	29	33	25	37	4	19
$6500-$7800	26	30	23	34	3	14
$7800-$10,000	13	15	9	13	4	19
Over $10,000	5	5	2	4	3	14
Total	88	100	67	100	21	99*

*Not 100 percent because of rounding off.

Relation and Satisfaction of Job to College Program. The students were asked how much their job was related to their M.C.C. program. Fifty-six percent said very much, 26 percent said somewhat, and 18 percent said very little. If their job was not related to their college program, they were asked to respond to five choices of why not. The reasons and number of responses shown are:

Reason	Number
1. Could not find a job in field of preparation.	4
2. Found a better paying job in another field.	4
3. Change of interest.	4
4. Qualified for a new job by additional education.	2
5. Other	4

Sixty-one percent said they found their jobs challenging and interesting, twenty-four percent said sometimes they were boring and sometimes they were interesting. Thirteen percent said it was just a job that gave them an income. Only one person said his job was boring and unsatisfactory.

In evaluating their preparation at M.C.C. for their first job, 41 percent said it was superior, 56 percent said adequate, and only 3 percent said inadequate.

College Courses Most Helpful. Each student was then asked to state the college course or courses that he felt helped him the most on the job. The responses were divided into liberal arts courses and professional courses. It must be kept in mind that the students were largely in allied health, business and secretarial programs.

The courses which exceeded by far all other liberal arts courses favored by the students were psychology and economics. The course next in favor was anatomy and physiology. In the more professionalized courses, typing, accounting, and secretarial procedures received the largest number of favorable responses. In the allied health fields, the courses selected appeared to reflect the number of respondents in each area; for example, 16 of the respondents were in dental assisting and 13 of the responses gave dental assisting, and dental science as the most helpful courses.

Location of Employment. All students were asked to name the business, company, or agency by whom they are currently employed. The summary showed that 15 students were employed by doctors, dentists or medical clinics, 9 were emplcyed in hospitals, and the remaining in businesses or industries. Almost the total group were employed in various towns in the western suburbs of Boston. Only two students were employed in Boston and three had jobs out-of-state.

Summary. In summarizing the information obtained about M.C.C. career program graduates, it appears to be very positive. Most of the students have jobs that they find challenging and interesting. The majority felt that their jobs were related to the program they had completed at M.C.C.

And even though seven or eight of the males as well as the females made under $5200, the greater percentage made an annual salary of between $5200-$10,000. And, almost all of the students had found a job within a 15 mile radius of the college in the suburban area of Boston.

Ninety-seven percent of the students rated their college preparation as adequate or superior. And, six students are now attending a four-year college.

Middlesex Community College is obviously providing the type of program that leads to immediate employment and the students are generally well satisfied with their preparation.

Recommendations. The employment patterns of career graduates should be studied more completely. There should be an attempt to get an accurate placement report on each student who graduates and takes a job. The college should have a record of all current employers.

Each year a survey should be made of current employers asking them about the degree of their satisfaction with Middlesex Community College graduate employees. They should be asked for specific skills that are needed on special jobs to improve current programs. And, they should be consulted frequently about the needs in middle-level manpower employment.

Students should be given briefings before they graduate about follow-up procedures and the rationale for college surveys. They should be encouraged to make suggestions for program improvement and to feel open about giving information for college research and development.

This initial study should be continued with considerable expansion into the reasons why many of the answers were given. Also, personal interviews should be made for more in-depth study.

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